

Zoomorphizing the Asterisms: Indigenous Interpretations of the Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions in the History of China

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Abstract: The twenty-eight lunar mansions, one of the core ideas of the Chinese understanding of the celestial sphere, had been known as a guide to celestial areas and specific times dating back to antiquity. By combining with the Chinese thought of *yinyang wuxing* 陰陽五行, the lunar mansions became far more indigenous in character; at first, astronomical zoomorphism was not common in Han cosmology, but it became more so through this process of indigenization and standardization, especially from around the eleventh century. This period can be described as a major turning point in the historiography of the lunar mansions in China in that a complete iconography consisting of relatively familiar animals, instead of sacred imaginary beasts, appeared in many textual and visual materials (especially Daoist examples). Starting in the Yuan period, this zoomorphic iconography also appeared on official ceremonial flags unrelated to divination or astronomy. This may suggest changing Chinese attitudes toward the lunar mansions. The wish to control a wild but redoubtable nature may have bestowed a particular secular terrestrial significance on celestial bodies.

Keywords: animal symbols, Daoism, divination, twenty-eight lunar mansions, indigenization

Introduction

The stars have been examined and represented in various ways in most cultural contexts, not just subjects of academic investigation but as objects of imagination, visualization, and divination. Among the numerous stars and asterisms, the twenty-eight lunar mansions (宿 *xiu*) have been seen as important celestial bodies in East Asian countries. The lunar mansions are twenty-eight asterisms found in twenty-eight segments of the sky.¹ They are called lunar mansions because the moon passes through these asterisms in order as if they were mansions for the moon to stay in during its cycle of twenty-seven or twenty-eight days. Lunar mansions have been significant as a datum point of sky division and in ancient calendar systems.

Considering their significance, it is not surprising that the twenty-eight lunar mansions have often been visualized and even deified in East Asia. Historically, most major celestial bodies have been represented in numerous ways, from simple dot-and-line diagrams to anthropomorphic forms. The twenty-eight lunar mansions, too, have been illustrated in diagrammatic, anthropomorphic, and zoomorphic forms. The animalization of stars or asterisms is not unusual in the Western world. For example, the twelve signs of the zodiac take their names from

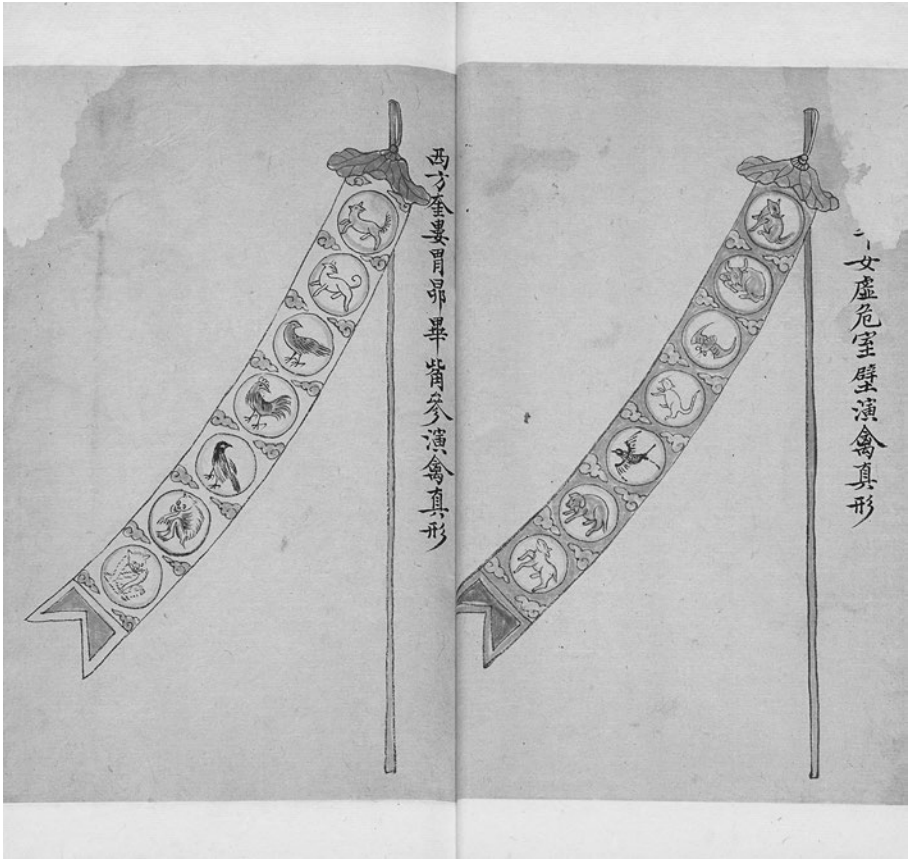


Figure 1. *Manual of Divine Armies' Banners*, color on printed paper, Qing dynasty. Courtesy of Harvard-Yenching library.

the shapes of the patterns created by stars. Thus, one constellation of the twelve zodiacs, Leo, was named after a lion because its shape is reminiscent of the animal. In the Western astronomical tradition, perhaps best represented by Greek astronomy, many constellations are understood based on their specific patterns and associations with familiar objects, including animals.

In contrast, astronomical zoomorphism has not been so common in East Asia. In ancient China, the natural world was understood through the lens of human affairs. Although there has been no constant principle in naming stars and asterisms in China, the naming process was generally influenced by “the overwhelmingly agrarian and bureaucratic nature of ancient Chinese civilisation” (Needham 1959: 273), where animals have no specific place in terms of description or representation.

The association of the lunar mansions with animals or animal symbols, as observed in later textual and visual materials in China, is therefore noteworthy. One example is a ceremonial banner symbolizing lunar mansions, discussed further below (fig. 1). Instead of dot-and-line diagrams, seven animal symbols in roundels represent seven of the lunar mansions. This iconography was accepted

elsewhere in East Asia too. The represented animals appear to have nothing to do with Chinese bureaucracy, agriculture, or the actual shape of the constellation, so what led to these animal compositions? What is their historical significance? This article starts with these questions.

As a common human practice, symbolizing and visualizing nature can be conventionally approached from an anthropological perspective. In his study of the bird and serpent images of the Pueblo Indians, Aby Warburg (1998) suggested that natural images collectively shared by a community are a means of understanding and communicating with nature, the otherwise unknown world. If we follow this perspective, newly emerged images of the natural world—in this case, the zoomorphic iconography of the lunar mansions that appear after the eleventh century—reflect changes in the way a community understands natural objects.

This study will examine the history of the representations of the twenty-eight lunar mansions in China. The focus will be on how these twenty-eight lunar mansions have been understood and used, based on extant cultural traditions. As well as addressing how the premodern Chinese understood nature, I will discuss below how they reinterpreted and assimilated the astronomical idea in their own unique way.

The Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions in Chinese Culture

Early Materials

It is not clear when the idea of the twenty-eight lunar mansions first emerged in China. Babylonian and Indian astrology also had a similar idea of twenty-seven or twenty-eight constellations located along the path of the moon. *The Sūtra of Lunar Mansions and Planets* (Xiuyao jing 宿曜經), translated or possibly compiled by the Indian monk Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空, 704–74), discusses the twenty-eight *nakṣatra* (lunar mansions). This text, an influential work in the corpus of astrology in East Asia, is based mainly on the astral knowledge of India but contains Babylonian, central Asian, and even Chinese influences as well. The twenty-eight *nakṣatra* of Indian astrology are to be distinguished from the twenty-eight lunar mansions of Chinese tradition, although these two had often been thought identical; however, *the Sūtra of Lunar Mansions and Planets* and other astrological works conveyed to China by Indian astrologers have been used to identify foreign influence on Chinese astrology. In the last century, for instance, Carl Bezold and, later, Joseph Needham, who cited Bezold's work in his monumental publication *Science and Civilisation in China*, emphasized the Babylonian influence on Chinese astrology (Bezold 1919; Needham 1959). In the same vein, their works also suggested a foreign origin for the twenty-eight lunar mansions in China. However, recent scholarship has revealed the independent development of the lunar mansions idea in China based on its notable idiosyncrasies (Zenba 1957; Stephenson 1998; Steele 2013; Pankenier 2014).

Archeological evidence indicates that this idea emerged in China before the mid-fifth century BCE at the very latest. However, animal symbols did not appear denoting lunar mansions during this earlier phase. A lacquer chest from the Zeng Hou Yi Tomb (曾侯乙墓, “Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng”) dated 433 BCE depicts the Northern Dipper surrounded by the lunar mansions. The lunar mansions are represented as twenty-eight characters simply denoting each of their names, not

as dot-and-line diagrams or other symbolic images. The characters are arranged in a circular shape surrounding the larger character *dou* 斗, meaning the Northern Dipper. Although each of the lunar mansions is shown in textual rather than visual form, the arrangement of the lunar mansions is reminiscent of the celestial maps often observed on the ceiling of ancient tombs in China, such as the Liao dynasty tombs from the Xuanhua District 宣化区, Hebei Province 河北省. The earliest extant visual representation of the twenty-eight lunar mansions is found in a tomb in Xi'an, dating from around the first century BCE (Stephenson 1998: 523). The lunar mansions are illustrated in order in a circular band on the tomb's ceiling. The sun and moon are depicted within the circle.

The celestial sphere had been represented by the sun, moon, planets, and asterisms on the ceilings of tombs in East Asia for more than a thousand years. This convention is based on the idea that a tomb is an afterlife abode or a microcosmos for the dead (Rawson 1999: 6). The ceiling of a tomb, analogous to heaven, is often decorated by celestial bodies as if “heaven hung images in the sky and revealed good fortune and bad, and the sages regarded these as meaningful signs.”² Therefore, despite a gap of more than a millennium, the twenty-eight lunar mansions in the Xi'an and Xuanhua tombs noted above can be understood as a component of the microcosmos and as the bearers of signs manifested by heaven.

In Buddhist scriptures, the twenty-eight lunar mansions are mentioned in the *Mātanga Sutra* (摩登伽經) translated in 230 by Zhu Lüyan (竺律炎 fl. third century) and Zhi Qian (支謙 fl. third century), and in another translation of the same manuscript, *Prince Shetoujian's Sūtra of Twenty-Eight Mansions* (Shetoujian taizi ershibaxiu jing 舍頭諫太子二十八宿經), translated in the early fourth century by Zhu Fahu (竺法護, 233–316).³ These texts provide information about lunar mansions, such as the number of stars and the patron deities of each celestial element. Practical knowledge required for carrying out rituals is also included, such as the type of food offerings for each lunar mansion. For example, *mao* (昴)—corresponding to the Pleiades in Western astronomy—comprises six stars. It is the abode of the fire god Agni, and curds are the appropriate food sacrifice to ward off disasters.⁴

Further, the above-mentioned texts note that the twenty-eight lunar mansions are associated with certain personalities. Among the lunar mansions, seven are supreme: *zhang* 張, *shi* 室, *di* 氐, *ji* 箕, *fang* 房, *jing* 井, and *kang* 亢. Three are devilish: *shen* 參, *liu* 柳, and *wei* 胃. Four are kindly: *yi* 翼, *dou* 斗, *bi* 壁, and *bi* 畢. Five are passive: *nü* 女, *xu* 虛, *wei* 危, *xin* 心, and *wei* 尾. Five are steadfast: *zi* 觜, *jiao* 角, *qixing* 七星, *liu* 柳, and *niu* 牛. Finally, four are quick: *mao* 昴, *zi* 觜, *lou* 婁, and *gui* 鬼.⁵

A certain temporal significance is also ascribed to each lunar mansion. Someone born on a day when the moon leaves *mao* has great renown and is revered by others. A town founded when the moon leaves *mao* enjoys great majesty and abundant riches, but it may be damaged by a great fire in the future. The texts also suggest that one should do specific things such as perform sacrifices or repair houses when the moon is in a certain lunar mansion—that is, the association with characteristics is not confined to the asterism but is also applied to specific times related to that asterism. The lunar mansions are not just asterisms or indicators of the celestial sphere but also indicators of time. As such, their

designated characteristics can be used to predict someone's fate or the result of events that happen at a certain time. This method of fate calculation, introduced from the West, can be called "horoscopic astronomy" or "genethliacal astrology" (Nakayama 1966: 442). However, such connotations are not relevant to the actual number of stars, their brightness or shape, or even the Chinese name of each asterism. Additionally, there is no consistency between the personality features of the lunar mansion itself and those born on a specific day of the lunar mansion. For instance, *jiao* 角 literally means "horn" and is a steadfast lunar mansion. It requires sacrifices with flowers, and someone born on a day when the moon leaves this asterism is well versed in music and skilled at making necklaces. It is unclear how the lunar mansion paradigm directly correlates with certain personalities or fates.

The Twenty-Eight Generals of the Dynastic Revival

Astral divination is not the only way to reference the twenty-eight lunar mansions in China. The *Book of the Later Han* (Hou Hanshu 後漢書, 5th century) and *Selections of Refined Literature* (Wen Xuan 文選, 6th century) compare lunar mansions to historical heroes: *zhongxing ershiba jiang* (中興二十八將, "twenty-eight generals of the dynastic revival").⁶ These founding generals of the Later Han, or Eastern Han, (25–220) served Emperor Guang Wu 光武帝 (r. 25–55), the founder of the dynasty. Emperor Ming 明帝 (r. 57–75), son of Emperor Guang Wu, honored the generals by painting their portraits and enshrining them on the Yuntai (雲台, cloud terrace) in Luoyang 洛陽. Crown Prince Zhaoming 昭明太子 (501–31), compiler of the *Selections of Refined Literature*, began the entry on the twenty-eight generals by noting that they had been known as the twenty-eight lunar mansions in an earlier incarnation. This may have been a way to emphasize that all the generals were talented and virtuous. This example of the twenty-eight generals is a different tradition from the earlier one of astral divination. In Buddhist astrology, the movement and properties of the twenty-eight lunar mansions are of central importance. The lunar mansions in this context function as a patron asterism of some specific person or specific time and thus influence certain times and persons or events related to that time—that is, the properties of sacred celestial bodies manifest themselves in the human world and thereby apply to human affairs. Conversely, the paradigm of the twenty-eight generals works in the opposite direction. There is no record that the founding generals were born with the qualities said to be embodied in the lunar mansions. Rather, they had outstanding abilities and were therefore compared to the celestial bodies by subsequent generations. This is an example of the deification of actual historical figures. It is the generals themselves who are significant, not the lunar mansions. The generals were likened to the lunar mansions largely because their number corresponded to the number of lunar mansions. In the process of deification, the specific characteristics of the lunar mansions did not matter—only the talents and achievements of the generals counted.

The example of the twenty-eight generals is not the only case of association between historical figures and stars in East Asia. On the Korean Peninsula, the motif of the falling star is recognizable in several dynastic foundation myths and birth myths of heroes. According to the legend of Kang Kamch'an 姜邯贊 or 姜邯瓚 (948–1031), a military commander of the Koryŏ dynasty, a meteor fell onto his house on the day he was born. He is also called the incarnation of Mun'gok

sǒng (文曲星, “literary arts star”), one of the seven stars of the Northern Dipper.⁷ This demonstrates that the birth of great personalities could be idiomatically associated with stars. A star falling to earth symbolizes auspiciousness. Although this metaphor of stars connected to eminent historical figures is not unknown in East Asia, in the case of lunar mansions, it is somewhat more unusual than earlier astrological understandings of the twenty-eight lunar mansions and their later zoomorphic symbolization.

Agents of Tian

As demonstrated, stars have been utilized in many ways in the history of China. Stars such as the twenty-eight lunar mansions were included in the pictorial programs of ancient tombs, representing the microcosmos for the dead. They were also used to glorify historical figures. Moreover, using the lunar mansions in celestial omenology would have been most familiar to the ancient Chinese. Throughout Chinese history, the twenty-eight lunar mansions have been a marker of time and a measure of divination for the state.

As part of the grand celestial sphere, the notion of *tian* 天 has been applied to the idea of major asterisms. *Tian* translates literally as “sky” or “heaven” but has had a far more complicated and nuanced significance. Although a nontheistic understanding of *tian*, as a part of indifferent material nature, was dominant in periods in Chinese history, it was mainly considered to be a kind of spiritual being that responds to the secular world. *Tian* as a mandator who responds to human affairs was discussed theoretically by thinkers from the spring and autumn period (770–476 BCE). During this period there was believed to be *ganying* (感應, “harmony and correspondence”) between the human and heavenly realms such that everything in human society was related to celestial and meteorological events.⁸ Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179–104 BCE) elaborated on the theory of *ganying*. To analogize the resonance between *tian* and humanity, Dong suggested the pairing of a person and *tian* and the notion of humanity as representing in some fashion a microcosm of *tian*.⁹ This belief is reflected in classical texts such as the *Masters of Huainan* (Huainanzi 淮南子) from the second century BCE:

The natures of the rulers of men penetrate to Heaven on high. Thus, if there are punishments and cruelty, there will be whirlwinds. If there are wrongful ordinances, there will be plagues of devouring insects. If there are unjust executions, the land will redden with drought. If (lawful) commands are not accepted, there will be great excess of rain. The four seasons are the officers of Heaven. The sun and moon are the agents of Heaven. The stars and planets mark the appointed times of Heaven. Rainbows and comets are the portents of Heaven.¹⁰

This concept of heaven as a moral being that can intervene in human affairs is reflected in the idea of the twenty-eight lunar mansions as well. Asterisms that can be involved in the earthly realm bestow certain properties on a person or predict the future by showing their movement and position. The lunar mansions here are components of the cosmos and the agents of *tian*.

The Zoomorphic Form of Lunar Mansions

A Series of Animal Symbols

Symbolizing stars in anthropomorphic form has a long tradition in China. A relief carving depicting the Celestial Thearch from the Wuliang Shrine—a Han dynasty monument—is an example of personification of the Pole Star. The lunar mansions appear already in ancient archaeological relics, but their evolution into anthropomorphism was relatively late. The sixth-century painting *Five Planets and Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions*, attributed to Zhang Sengyou 張僧繇 (fl. 490–540), is one of the earliest cases. In this painting, lunar mansions are represented in personified form with some zoomorphic elements. For example, Fang (房) is depicted as a young man with scorpion-shaped headgear, a dragon's tail, and bodily scales. Xin (心), following Fang, has the same appearance. Here the scorpion headgear of the two figures came from the asterism of the scorpion of Western astrology in that Fang and Xin are located near the scorpion. This is the influence of foreign astrology, including the twelve zodiac signs, imported into China (Takeda 1995: 195). Similarly, Kang (亢), corresponding to Libra of the West, is a man holding a scale. Even though some zoomorphic elements are shown due to this foreign inspiration, this aspect cannot be called zoomorphism but rather should be understood as a personification or deification of the asterisms. The animal elements were added to the lunar mansions' bodies, clothing, and ornaments to express their individuality. Visualization of the lunar mansions in this painting shows Chinese acceptance of foreign astronomic knowledge (e.g., the twelve zodiacs) combining with the existing astral tradition (the twenty-eight lunar mansions). A tenth-century illustration from *Tejaprabhā's Great Majestic, Virtuous, and Auspicious Dhāraṇī Sūtra for Averting Calamities* (Chishengguang foding da weide xiaozai jixiang tuoluoni jing 熾盛光佛頂大威德消災吉祥陀羅尼經) showing the same iconography of the lunar mansions indicates that this newly appeared iconography lasted for a hundred years.

Meanwhile, a series of thirty-six animals has been evident in the Chinese history of astral divination. This set of animals first appeared in the fourth century as found in the classical text *Embracing the Master of Simplicity* (Baopuzi 抱朴子), and its association with lunar mansions also emerged around the period of this text. One of the diviner's boards (*shi* 式) for *Liuren* 六壬 methods of calendrical astrology, a relic of the Six Dynasties (222–589), shows the connection between the twenty-eight lunar mansions and the thirty-six animal symbols. According to Marc Kalinowski (1996: 62–64), the thirty-six animals of the fourth or the fifth century were used to denote periods or times of the day but also were related to divination with lunar mansions. It is unclear how these thirty-six animals were invented, but animals comprising this set include those of the twelve zodiac signs of the earthly branch and the twenty-eight animal symbols of lunar mansions to be explained later. That is, several series of animal symbols had appeared in history and each convention was not completely separate. Rather, we may conclude that these are historical variations of zoomorphic symbolization.

The eleventh century witnessed the completed iconography of the twenty-eight zoomorphic lunar mansions. The animals included are not related to those of former iconography as seen in Zhang Sengyou's painting or the twelve zodiacs of

Western lore. As a Chinese tradition, and as a part of the thirty-six earlier animals, the animal symbol of the lunar mansions has always appeared in combination with *yinyang wuxing* (陰陽五行, “yin, yang, and the five agents”). The earliest record of this association, called *xing qin* (星禽, “stars and animals”), is in the *Augmented Ready Guide* (Piya 埤雅, eleventh century), a Chinese dictionary compiled by Lu Dian 陸佃 (1042–1102). Under the entry *jiao* 蛟, the combinations of one *wuxing*, an animal, and one of the twenty-eight lunar mansions are noted. For example, the wood scaly dragon of *jiao* (*jiao mu jiao* 角木蛟), the metal dragon of *kang* (*kang jin long* 亢金龍), and the earth badger of *di* (*di tu mo* 氏土貉) are listed as *xingqin yanfa* (星禽衍法, “the law on the interpretation of stars and animals”). There is no detailed explanation about what this law is. It seems that the first appearance of *xing qin* was earlier than the eleventh century, and this idea was already familiar to the reader of the *Augmented Ready Guide*, so presumably no explanation was required.

In the context of *xing qin*, the twenty-eight lunar mansions are combined with various animals¹¹ and, above all, are related to *yinyang wuxing*, which are indigenous Chinese cultural elements. As will be explained below, this association lasted into later periods and is preserved even today with little variation. One can see this iconography of lunar mansions in, for example, official ceremonial banners, Daoist texts, and even public literature. This suggests that animalization of the lunar mansions became standardized and had no more major variation. The completion and standardization of zoomorphic iconography took place hundreds of years after the appearance of the twenty-eight lunar mansions and even after that of the thirty-six animals. Thus, it was certainly a later addition to an existing idea. Why, then, was this animal iconography standardized around the eleventh century, not earlier?

To seek an answer to this question, we can look to the *zangfu* (臟腑, “internal organs”) theory of Daoism. The *zangfu* theory is presented in several Daoist works dating from between the first and third centuries. According to this, the organs of the human body are divided into five *zang* 臟, or inner organs, and six *fu* 腑, or outer organs. As this theory was developed by Daoist thinkers between the Northern and Southern dynasties and the Song periods, the five *zang* and one *fu* began to be represented by imaginary beasts. For example, in the *Precious Scroll of the Zhenren on the Six Receptacles and Five Viscera of the Yellow Court of Shangqing* (Shangqing huangting wuzang liufu zhenren yuzhou jing 上清黃庭五藏六腑真人玉軸經, Tang or Song dynasty), the lung, heart, liver, spleen, kidney, and gallbladder are represented by the white beast, vermilion bird, dragon, phoenix, two-headed deer, and turtle snake, respectively (fig. 2). Other Daoist books based on the *zangfu* theory include similar ideas, with some variations. The beasts were not selected at random to represent the organs, although there was no single, definite principle for the selection. Some were selected because of their physical resemblance or correspondence to *wuxing* and the cardinal directions (e.g., the heart representing fire, the vermilion bird the south), while others were selected as a metaphor for the *shen* (神, “spirit”) of each organ, which has its own character (Zhang 2018: 390–98).

The animal metaphor for human organs appeared a little earlier than that of the animal form for lunar mansions. There were long-standing conventions of

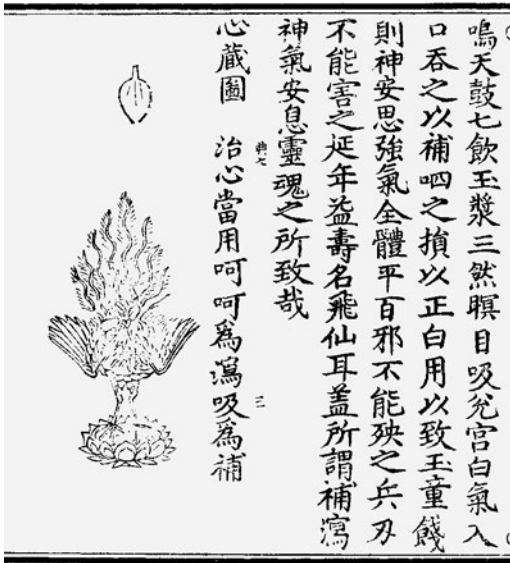


Figure 2. Symbolic image of the heart (vermilion bird) in the *Precious Scroll of the Zhenren on the Six Receptacles and Five Viscera of the Yellow Court of Shangqing* (DZ1402).

zoomorphic representations of nature, so the new Daoist tradition of using zoomorphic metaphors during the Tang and Song periods possibly informed other fields of Chinese culture, such as astral divination. This is not to argue that there is a direct relationship between the animal symbols of the organs and those of the lunar mansions. The composition and systems of both groups of animals are totally different from each other. Unlike the animal symbols of *zangfu*, for example, those of the lunar mansions are not imaginary but mostly real, familiar animals. However, Daoist zoomorphism may have inspired similar cultural phenomena in other fields that were under almost the same temporal and spatial conditions—in this case, standardizing zoomorphism in astral divination.

The *Humble Calculation* (Jin Suan 謹算) from Khara-Khoto represented a continuation of the lunar mansions' animal symbols. This Tangut astrology document contains information on fortune-telling for a person using asterisms, *yinyang wuxing*, and the twelve *dizhi* (地支, "earthly branches"). To be specific, a person named Liang Xipan was born on the day of water puppy of *bi* (*bi shui wo* 壁水獮). Liang's personality and fate were predicted based on this patron asterism and its animal symbol. It remains unknown when this genethliology was introduced to the Tangut. The *Humble Calculation* was written in 1306, so the fate-calculating method used therein must have been established earlier than 1306. Although the Tangut document has been translated in different ways, it includes similar phrases to those observed in the *Augmented Ready Guide*: a combination of one lunar mansion, one of the *yinyang wuxing*, and one beast. There are minor differences between the text in the *Augmented Ready Guide* and the *Humble Calculation*, and the phrases in the former are more similar to those of later texts, which will be discussed further below. For example, the wood goose of *jing* (*jing mu yan* 井木雁) and the wood crab of *dou* (*dou mu xie* 斗木蟹)

in the *Humble Calculation* are replaced by the wood wild dog of *jing* (*jing mu an* 井木汗) and the wood *xiezhi* of *dou* (*dou mu xie* 斗木獬), respectively, in the *Augmented Ready Guide* and later publications. The *Humble Calculation* and Tangut divination seem to reflect earlier versions of the lunar mansions' animal symbols.

It is significant that the animal symbols of the twenty-eight lunar mansions are only observed in contexts where the lunar mansions and *yinyang wuxing* are combined and thus form an indigenous genethliac astrology. That is, the completion of zoomorphic iconography for the lunar mansions and standardization may have been inspired by existing cultural elements, as seen in the case of Daoist animal symbols of the organs.

Indigenization in Daoist Materials

The new tradition of astrological animal symbols continued into later periods and developed a more indigenous form. During the late Yuan or early Ming periods, the animal symbols for the lunar mansions appeared in historical records such as the *Collection of Principal Methods of the Dao* (Daofa huiyuan 道法會元, Ming dynasty), the *History of Yuan* (Yuanshi 元史, Ming dynasty), and *Guolao's Astral Body* (Guolao xingzong 果老星宗, 1593).¹² There were also visual materials, such as a mural in the Yongle Palace (永樂宮, "Palace of Eternal Joy"). Among them, in the *Collection of Principal Methods of the Dao*, animal symbols of the lunar mansions are mentioned as follows:

Twelve Lunar Mansions of a Talisman for *Nayin* (納音);
 East: the wood scaly dragon of *jiao* (角), metal dragon of *kang* (亢), earth badger of *di* (氐), fire tiger of *wei* (尾), water leopard of *ji* (箕);
 West: the wood wolf of *kui* (奎), metal dog of *lou* (婁), earth pheasant of *wei* (胃), fire monkey of *zi* (紫), water ape of *shen* (參);
 South: the wood wild dog of *jing* (井), metal sheep of *gui* (鬼), earth river deer of *liu* (柳), fire serpent of *yi* (翼), water earthworm of *zhen* (軫);
 North: the wood *xiezhi* of *dou* (斗), metal ox of *niu* (牛), earth bat of *nü* (女), fire pig of *shi* (室), water *yayu* of *bi* (壁);
 Center: Tie up the energy of the four directions and unite them.¹³

In this passage, five phrases consisting of three sinographs each are assigned for each of the four directions. Although its title mentions the twelve lunar mansions, twenty lunar mansions are discussed in the passage. It is likely that *shi'er* (十二, "twelve") was a mistake for *ershi* (二十, "twenty"). This short passage is about a talisman for *nayin* (納音, "containing musical notes"). *Nayin* is a system of classifying the cycle into the five notes (*gong* 宮, *shang* 商, *jue* 角, *zhi* 徵, and *yu* 羽) of the Chinese pentatonic scale. One of the five notes and one of the twelve pitch standards (*huangzhong* 黃鐘, *dacu* 大簇, *guxian* 姑洗, *ruibin* 蕤賓, *yize* 夷則, *wuyi* 無射, *dalü* 大呂, *jiazhong* 夾鐘, *zhonglü* 仲呂, *linzhong* 林鐘, *nanlü* 南呂, and *yingzhong* 應鐘) are connected to one of the sexagenary cycles, which are combinations of the ten *tiangan* (天干, "heavenly stems") and the twelve *dizhi*. This system, which was first explained in the fourth-century text *Embracing the Master of Simplicity*, was

used to determine the note and element governing one's life and therefore to predict one's fate (Harper and Kalinowski 2017: 470).

There was no mention of lunar mansions in early *nayin*-related documents such as the aforementioned *Embracing the Master of Simplicity*. Why, then, did the twenty-eight lunar mansions appear in a talisman for *nayin* in the *Collection of Principal Methods of the Dao*? It is necessary to examine *nayin*, a Chinese indigenous idea, before attempting to answer that question. *Nayin* presents two traditional strands of thought. One is that musical notes are connected to nature and governed by *yinyang wuxing*. The *Spring and Autumn [Annals] of Master Lü* (Lüshi chunqiu 呂氏春秋), a Chinese classical text compiled in the third century BCE, reveals this idea:

The Qi of Heaven and Earth are combined to produce the wind. At the winter solstice, the moon gathers the wind and gives rise to the twelve pitch standards. In the second month of winter, daytime is shortest; therefore, [this month] gives rise to *huangzhong*. The third month of winter gives rise to *dalü*; the first month of spring gives rise to *taicu* (*dacu*); the second month of spring gives rise to *jiazhong*; the third month of spring gives rise to *guxian*; the first month of summer gives rise to *zhonglü*. . . . If the wind and Qi of Heaven and Earth are appropriate, the twelve pitch standards are settled.¹⁴

This idea lasted more than a thousand years. In later publications, such as the *Brush Discussions of Dream Creek* (Mengxi bitan 夢溪筆談, eleventh century), for example, the five notes and twelve pitch standards are connected to *wuxing* and the twelve *dizhi*, respectively. These connections are found in other *nayin*-related texts as well.

Another important base for *nayin* is *sizhu* (四柱, “four pillars”). According to this idea, an individual's fate can be calculated by birth hour, day, month, and year—that is, the *sizhu* are denoted by a *tiangan* and a *dizhi*. The *tiangan-dizhi* combinations of the sexagenary cycle evolved as a means of recording time, which is under the influence of the *wuxing*.¹⁵ Due to the birth and death cycle of each element of *wuxing* and the interaction between them, each hour, day, month, and year designated by *tiangan* and *dizhi* has its own nature. Someone born at a certain hour on a certain day in a certain month and year is supposed to bear the same nature as that time, so his or her fate can be predicted.

Predicting one's future using *nayin* is based on the premise that musical notes, nature, and human affairs are interconnected. *Embracing the Master of Simplicity* is where the idea of *nayin* appears for the first time, and it also contains this assumption:

Somebody asked: “People say that when taking medicine to nourish nature there are some suggestions to be followed. Is that so?”

Baopuzi answered: According to the *Record of the Jade Tablet* (Yuce ji 玉策記) and the *Scripture of Incipient Insight* (Kaiming jing 開名經), we may all know our destiny by means of the five *yin* and the six *shu*. Zi (子) and wu (午) belong to *geng* (庚), mao (卯) and yu (酉) belong to *ji* (己), yin (寅) and shen (申) belong to *wu* (戊), chou (丑) and wei (未) belong to *xin* (辛), chen (辰) and xu (戌) belong to *bing* (丙), si (巳) and hai (亥) belong to *ding* (丁). Those who get them with one word are *gong* (宮) and *tu* (土), those with three

words are *zhi* (徵) and *hue* (火). Those with five words are *yu* (羽) and *shui* (水). Those with seven words are *shang* (商) and *jin* (金). And those with nine words are *jue* (角) and *mu* (木). If one's horoscope of life belongs to earth (土 *tu*), it is not advisable to eat medicine of a green color. If it belongs to metal (金 *jin*), it is not advisable to take medicine of a white color. If it belongs to water (水 *shui*), it is not advisable to take medicine of a yellow color. If it belongs to fire (火 *huo*), it is not advisable to take medicine of a black color. It is so because of the interrelation of the five elements; for wood defeats earth; earth defeats water; water defeats fire; fire defeats metal; and metal defeats wood. On the other hand, for the great medicine of *Jindan* it is useless to discuss what is advisable and what is not.¹⁶

That is, as part of the universe, individuals' fates and their nature are governed by the *wuxing* and their interactions. This is called *correlative cosmology*. Since the late Warring States period, Chinese thinkers have described the nature of the cosmos by employing the notion of *yinyang wuxing* and other devices and their correspondences. This correlative schema embracing the entire world shaped the foundation of Han cosmology and thereafter became the basis for Chinese cosmology, which influenced every aspect of culture over the two thousand years that followed.¹⁷

The twenty-eight lunar mansions had not been correlated with China's traditional fate calculation using *sizhu* or *nayin* when they first appeared in Chinese history. Rather, as a major fate-calculating method of astrology, the Chinese adopted the idea that one's *benmingxing* (本命星, "original destiny star") and the cosmic chart when one was born are indicators of one's personality and fate. However, the excerpt from the *Collection of Principal Methods of the Dao* above implies that the twenty-eight lunar mansions had been incorporated into indigenous divination methods, such as *nayin*, especially in Daoist thought.

Guolao's Astral Body, another Daoist text published in the sixteenth century, also mentions the animal symbols of the lunar mansions. This document was supposedly written by Zhang Guolao 張果老, one of the eight Daoist immortals who lived during the Tang dynasty. It provides detailed explanations of the lunar mansions used in *nayin*:

All the *nayin* (納音) stars illuminate and control destiny, so [one should] not avoid them. The four degrees of the Sun are as follows. *Xing* (星), *fang* (房), *mao* (昴), and *xu* (虛) are the four degrees of the Sun. . . . [There are people whose] destiny resides in the four degrees of the Sun. The Sun Horse of *xing* (星), Sun Rabbit of *fang* (房), Sun Rooster of *mao* (昴), and Sun Rat of *xu* (虛) are the four degrees of the Sun, those who rely mainly on the Sun. Those born in the daytime abstain from Mars and Rahu who compete with sunlight. [For them,] Mars becomes *yangren* (羊刃), [but if one] control[s] *yangren*, [one will] recover from one's bad luck. Rahu becomes *qifeng* (岐鋒). [If one tries to] compete with *qifeng*, [one's bad luck] will worsen. . . .

[There are people whose] destiny resides in the four degrees of the Moon. The Moon Deer of *zhang* (張), Moon Swallow of *wei* (危), Moon Vixen of *xin* (心), Moon Crow of *bi* (畢) are the four degrees of the Moon, those who rely mainly on Moon. Those born at night abstain from Saturn and Ketu. But Saturn and Ketu can obscure the Moon, so [for them], Saturn and Ketu are *yangren*-killing.¹⁸

Zoomorphizing the Asterisms

Table 1. Auspicious animal symbols of the twenty-eight lunar mansions in textual and visual materials.

	Guolao xingzong	Daofa huiyuan	Yuanshi	Yongle Palace	
EAST					
角 <i>jiao</i>	角木蛟	角木蛟	蛟 scaly dragon	dragon or scaly dragon	
亢 <i>kang</i>	亢金龍	亢金龍	龍 dragon	dragon or scaly dragon	
氏 <i>di</i>	氏土貉	氏土貉	貉 badger	badger	
房 <i>fang</i>	房日兔		兔 rabbit	rabbit	
心 <i>xin</i>	心月狐		狐 vixen	vixen	
尾 <i>wei</i>	尾火虎	尾火虎	虎 tiger	tiger	
箕 <i>ji</i>	箕水豹	箕水豹	豹 leopard	leopard	
NORTH					
斗 <i>dou</i>	斗木獬	斗木獬	獬 xiechi	crab	
牛 <i>niu</i>	牛金牛	牛金牛	牛 ox	ox	
女 <i>nu</i>	女土蝠	女土蝠	卻 bat	bat	

Table 1. (Continued)








	<i>Guolao xingzong</i>	<i>Daofa huiyuan</i>	<i>Yuanshi</i>		Yongle Palace
虛 xu	虛日鼠		鼠 rat	rat	
危 wei	危月燕		燕 swallow	swallow	
室 shi	室火豬	室火猪	豬 pig	pig	
壁 bi	壁水俞	壁水瑜	瑜 yayu	yayu	
WEST					
奎 kui	奎木狼	奎木狼	狼 wolf	wolf	
婁 lou	婁金狗	婁金狗	狗 dog	dog	
胃 wei	胃土雉	胃土雉	雉 pheasant	pheasant	
昴 mao	昴日雞		雞 rooster	rooster	
畢 bi	畢月烏		烏 crow	crow	
觜 zi	觜火猴	觜火猴	猴 monkey	monkey	
參 shen	參水猿	參水猿	猿 ape	ape	

Table 1. (Continued)

	<i>Guolao xingzong</i>	<i>Daofa huiyuan</i>	<i>Yuanshi</i>		Yongle Palace
SOUTH					
井 <i>ding</i>	井木犴	井水犴	犴 wild dog	wild dog	
鬼 <i>gui</i>	鬼金羊	鬼金羊	羊 sheep	sheep	
柳 <i>liu</i>	柳土獐	柳土獐	獐 river deer	river deer	
星 <i>xing</i>	星日馬		馬 horse	horse	
張 <i>zhang</i>	張月鹿		鹿 deer	deer	
翼 <i>yi</i>	翼火蛇	翼火蛇	蛇 serpent	serpent	
軫 <i>zhen</i>	軫水蚓	軫水蚓	蚓 earthworm	earthworm	

Guolao's Astral Body also records each of the four degrees of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. The pairing of animals and lunar mansions is almost the same as in the *Collection of Principal Methods of the Dao* (table 1). The level of detail provided in the explanation suggests that a combination of *nayin* and astrology was already part of the Daoist tradition when *Guolao's Astral Body* was published.

In *Guolao's Astral Body*, the twenty-eight lunar mansions assigned to the sun, moon, and *wuxing* are components of the phrases that describe one's fate. This is similar to the role of the ten *tiangan* and twelve *dizhi* in designating one's *sizhu* to predict one's future. In this sense, the twenty-eight auspicious animals might have been invented as a counterpart to the twelve animals of the zodiac of *dizhi*. The tradition of cyclical animal zodiac signs relating to one's birth year has existed since antiquity and is still used in China today. The basic idea behind these animal symbols of *dizhi* existed before the third century BCE, as attested by a *rishu* (日書, "daybook")

discovered in ancient tombs (Harper and Kalinowski 2017: 468–69). The established form of this idea was found in Wang Chong’s 王充 (27–100) treatise, the *Discussion of Scales* (Lunheng 論衡). In the twelve cyclical animals system, each animal matches one of twelve *dizhi* (zi 子, chou 丑, yin 寅, mao 卯, chen 辰, si 巳, wu 午, wei 未, shen 申, you 酉, xu 戌, and hai 亥). Their association was used to predict certain occurrences such as a robbery or illness. The long tradition of cyclical animals and their applications in divination, horoscopy, and various rituals in China encouraged the invention of another set of animal symbols, which were assigned to the lunar mansions.

It is unknown whether *nayin*’s correlation with the twenty-eight lunar mansions’ animal symbols was an exclusively Daoist notion or not, but the animal symbols appeared to be spread mainly by Daoist thought and materials. Among the visual evidence, animal symbols appear in the Daoist pantheon at Yongle Palace, the construction of which was completed in 1368. The fourteenth-century murals on the interior walls of the Sanqing Hall, the largest building of the palace, are especially noteworthy. They are significant monuments: in addition to their artistic significance, they represent a systemized Daoist pantheon consisting of 290 figures. The murals on the hall’s north wall depict several stellar deities. The twenty-eight lunar mansions are included here as attendants of Zhonggong ziwei beiji dadi (中宮紫微北極大帝, “Great Emperor of the Central Palace Pole Star of the Purple Subtlety”) and Gouchen xingong tianhuang dadi (勾陳星宮天皇大帝, “Great Emperor of Heaven in the Stellar Palace of Gouchen”). Each lunar mansion, shown in anthropomorphic form, wears an official robe and holds a scepter (table 1). What distinguishes these stellar deities from others is the animal designs on their headdresses. An animal head is either attached to the deity’s headdress or shown in a circular frame. The wood scaly dragon of *jiao*, metal dragon of *kang*, sun rabbit of *fang*, fire monkey of *zi*, and water ape of *shen* are all represented as anthropomorphic deities, adorned with animal heads. The lunar mansion animals here are almost identical to the textual references in the Daoist texts, except for the animal of *dou*, where the crab replaces *xiezhi*, a mythical horned creature. There is no visual allusion to *nayin* or other means of fortune-telling in the murals, so the meaning of the zoomorphic forms of the lunar mansions is unclear here. However, the lunar mansions and their animal symbols were certainly fully accepted as part of the Daoist pantheon when the mural was completed.

Auspicious but Controllable Animals

Again, it is unclear how each animal symbol in the twenty-eight lunar mansions was selected, as is the case for other compositions of emblematic animals in Chinese culture. The origin of the composition of the twelve *dizhi* of zodiacs, another well-known series of animal symbols, is also unknown. The series is believed to have appeared since the late Warring States period (Sterckx 2002: 67). As different sets of zodiac animals are among the archeological evidence, it appears that the composition of the zodiac developed over a long period, with variations. This implies there were loose criteria for selecting animals.

Many ancient Chinese texts suggest that the Chinese—especially rulers—tried to control the natural world and animals to reflect their social system. Animals, as distinct from humans, were accepted as beings that should be managed by

humans or human society. The society of the Masters of the Warring States period used the dichotomy of human/culture/morality and animal/nature/wild to define itself as human (Sterckx 2002: 93–94). This attitude toward animals influenced the nomenclature and classification of various beasts and animals.

It is noticeable that most zoomorphic symbols of the twenty-eight lunar mansions and the twelve *dizhi* of the zodiacs consist of familiar animals such as rabbits, roosters, and monkeys, especially when compared to the *sishen* (四神, “four spirits”), another bestiary attested since antiquity. The *sishen* refers to the azure dragon (*qinglong* 青龍) of the east, the vermilion bird (*zhuque* 朱雀) of the south, the white tiger (*baihu* 白虎) of the west, and the black tortoise (*xuanwu* 玄武) of the north. After some variations in the initial phase, the completed form of *sishen* was used to denote space and time, such as the four cardinal directions or the four seasons. The notion of *sishen* was used to grant directionality to major asterisms in combination with the twenty-eight lunar mansions. The *Discussion of Scales* suggests that this idea of *sishen* and its correlation to directions of asterisms was widespread in the late Han period (Kim Ilgwön 2001: 123): “The East is represented by wood, and its asterism is the Blue Dragon; the West by metal, and its asterism is the White Tiger. The South is represented by fire, and its asterism is the Vermilion Bird; the North by water, and its asterism is the Black Tortoise. Heaven, by emitting the essence of these four asterisms, produces the bodies of these four animals on earth.”¹⁹

The azure dragon, the vermilion bird, the white tiger, and the black tortoise are not only auspicious but also imaginary beasts that cannot be seen in the real world. The ancient Chinese imagined these beasts, which are neither part of civilization nor the wilderness. As sacred animals beyond the dichotomy of civilization and wilderness, *sishen* were assigned to manage celestial directions and asterisms.

In contrast to *sishen*'s consisting of sacred imaginary beasts, the symbolic animals of the twenty-eight lunar mansions are relatively ordinary. Interestingly, the lunar mansions' animal symbols are often accompanied by *sishen* when they appear in ancient tombs, for example, or on ceremonial flags of later periods. It is believed that each one of the four *sishen*, which symbolize the cardinal directions, manages seven of the twenty-eight lunar mansions. Many of the animals connected to the lunar mansions pose no threat to human society. Aside from dragons and tigers, most of these zoomorphic symbols are animals that can be controlled or tamed by humans. As another indicator of space and time other than *sishen*, the newly developed iconography of the lunar mansions around the eleventh century suggests the changing Chinese attitudes toward nature, time, and space. That is, the Chinese tried to control and manage their surroundings rather than considered nature sacred and inviolable. The lunar mansions' animal symbols are auspicious to some degree but are also touchable beings that live in earthly habitats. Represented by familiar animals, the major asterisms were brought down to the level of the mundane world.

In summary, the auspicious animals of the twenty-eight lunar mansions are a later addition to an existing idea. Their invention may have been a response to the tradition of cyclical animals in the Chinese fate-calculating system, a reaction to zoomorphic analogy inspired by Daoist conventions, or a result of changes in understandings of time and space. Although it was mostly Daoists who adopted

this new iconography into their astrology, it also became integrated into the ceremonial context of the state during the Yuan dynasty, as will be discussed in the following section. The meaning of the lunar mansions as temporal and spatial indicators extended into manageable territory, as demonstrated by ceremonial flags.

Extension to Terrestrial Symbols

Since the Yuan period, animal symbols connected to the lunar mansions have appeared in places other than Daoist and horoscopic contexts; for example, they started to be depicted on official ceremonial flags. Among the extant official texts, the *History of Yuan* is the earliest that records ceremonial flags bearing animal symbols. This record indicates that the lunar mansions' animal symbols were used in official Yuan state rituals. The flags of the twenty-eight lunar mansions are described in a section of *yizhang* (儀仗, "imperial regalia"), a kind of guideline for the use of official regalia such as weapons or flags. It is written that the flag of *jiao* is blue and its flame-shaped edge is red. On the flag, a female deity stands on a cloud in the air, wearing a vermilion robe and a black gown. *Jiao* is illustrated as a two-star asterisk, and its animal symbol, a scaly dragon, should be depicted in the lower part of the flag.²⁰ The other flags also include their own animal images in the lower part. Although there is no extant material evidence reflecting these exact descriptions, the descriptions do indicate that the use of animal symbols associated with the lunar mansions expanded to non-Daoist areas.

This new tradition was maintained by the dynasties that followed and was also transmitted to neighboring regions. For example, the *Manual of Divine Armies' Banners* (Shenbing qishi 神兵旗式), a Qing manuscript, provides four illustrations of banners depicting the twenty-eight lunar mansions, along with other flags. These vertical banners symbolizing the four cardinal directions include seven animals, one for each direction in a roundel (fig. 1). The illustrations are titled *yanqin zhenxing* 演禽真形, which means "the true form of [seven lunar mansions of the cardinal directions] illustrated by animals." The crest-like animal symbols replace the dot-and-line stellar images here.

The illustrations of the *Manual of Divine Armies' Banners* are not the same in design or color as those described in the above-mentioned *History of Yuan*, but the illustrated animals are identical. It seems that the composition of auspicious animals for the lunar mansions became fixed and did not change even when the design of the flag changed. It is unknown how this new type of banner depicting the lunar mansions became incorporated into the official arena, but it was introduced to the Korean Peninsula at some point and used on official flags there too (fig. 3). Among the relics of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea (1919–45) is a decorative banner that was used as an official ceremonial flag. This was once one of four banners representing the twenty-eight lunar mansions but now is the only remaining example. Here, the seven animals of the south (*nanfang qishou* 南方七獸: wild dog, sheep, river deer, deer, horse, serpent, and earthworm) are depicted in circular frames. Despite minor variations, the banner's composition shows that its design was derived from Chinese predecessors.



Figure 3. Decorative banner of an official ceremonial flag of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea, embroidery on silk, late nineteenth–early twentieth century. Courtesy of the National Palace Museum of Korea.

To examine the significance of the animal symbols here, one should investigate the official flags first. The twenty-eight lunar mansions are not the only objects represented on the flags or banners. Other flags depict other symbolic images. For instance, in the *Manual of Divine Armies' Banners*, five flags denoting the five directions (center, south, east, north, and west) come first. Each flag depicts a symbolic beast of that direction—the yellow dragon, vermilion bird, azure dragon, black tortoise, and white tiger, respectively. After these initial five flags, four flags representing the four *yuanshi* (元帥, “marshals”) follow. The four *yuanshi* (Marshals

Ma, Wen, Zhao, and Guan) are mythical protectors of the teachings of Daoism and are often mentioned in Ming and Qing popular literature (Efurd 2012: 101–2). After more flags, the four banners of the twenty-eight lunar mansions symbolizing the four directions follow, then another twenty-eight flags depicting one lunar mansion each are illustrated. Each flag with a red flame-shaped edge depicts a dot-and-line asterism image and an animal symbol. The final part of the manual contains the flags of the six *ding* 丁 *shenjiang* (神將, “divine generals”) and six *jia* (甲) *shenjiang*.²¹ The iconography of animal-headed generals might have derived from that of the twelve *dizhi* zodiacs. For example, the *jiazi* 甲子 general, one of the *jia shenjiang*, is illustrated with a rat’s head and human body. *Zi* 子, one of the twelve *dizhi*, is represented as a rat. Although some pages might be missing, the overall composition of the *Manual of Divine Armies’ Banners* appears to follow a certain discipline, such as describing the all-around direction of the universe in order. Every symbolic image in the text is connected to a certain spatial or temporal sphere, such as the five directions. The four marshals here also represent the four cardinal directions. The use of sexagenary names for *shenjiang*, such as *jiazi* or *dinghai* 丁亥, indicates that each figure symbolizes a certain time.

In this context, the temporal meanings of lunar mansions—which were important in ancient divination—were weakened. The lunar mansions’ spatial meaning was stressed instead, as they were illustrated on directional banners. The official ceremony where the flags and banners were used was mostly a ruler’s procession. The initial purpose of the flags and banners might have been communication, visualization of systematic arrangement of the ruler’s guard, and, further, the symbolization of the protection of the ruler. However, the symbolic meaning was extended to more than that. Ceremonial flags used in official state rituals in the Yuan and Ming periods were meant to glorify rulers. The ritualized composition and design of the flags emblemize a well-constructed microcosmos under the reign of a ruler. Various spatial symbols on the flags were depicted to denote the ruler’s region of authority, and the twenty-eight lunar mansions were among these. This is why animal symbols in roundels are emphasized over celestial dot-and-line diagrams. By using the metaphor of earthly animals, these asterisms with a long history became territorial symbols as well.

Conclusion

The twenty-eight lunar mansions are a group of asterisms that have been understood based on their spatial and temporal meaning since antiquity in China. When the twenty-eight lunar mansions first appeared in Chinese history, possibly before the mid-fifth century BCE, they were indicators of a celestial area and a specific time, as exemplified by divination. As time went by, the lunar mansions combined with indigenous thought about fate calculation, such as *yinyang wuxing* or *sizhu*. This combination, observed only in China and neighboring East Asian countries, is a unique understanding of celestial bodies.

This study has addressed the indigenization of this astronomic idea, focusing specifically on the development of its zoomorphism. The late completion of animal iconography around the eleventh century reflects how the acceptance of the lunar

mansions and their nature changed around this period. By adding and solidifying familiar animal emblems to lunar mansions, they became spatial indicators not of the celestial sphere but of the earthly world ruled by the son of heaven. The major asterisms that had been significant in ancient astrology began to serve rulers, not only *tian* or heaven. The wish to control a wild but redoubtable nature had persisted since antiquity and bestowed extended terrestrial meaning to well-known celestial bodies. The auspicious but familiar animal symbols were a result of this interpretation.

NOTES

1. The twenty-eight lunar mansions are 角 (*jiao*), 亢 (*kang*), 氐 (*di*), 房 (*fang*), 心 (*xin*), 尾 (*wei*), and 箕 (*ji*) for the east; 斗 (*dou*), 牛 (*niu*), 女 (*nǚ*), 虛 (*xu*), 危 (*wei*), 室 (*shi*), and 壁 (*bi*) for the north; 奎 (*kui*), 婁 (*lou*), 胃 (*wei*), 昴 (*mao*), 畢 (*bi*), 觜 (*zi*), and 參 (*shen*) for the west; and 井 (*jing*), 鬼 (*gui*), 柳 (*liu*), 星 (*xing*), 張 (*zhang*), 翼 (*yi*), and 軫 (*zhen*) for the south.

2. “天垂象 見吉凶 聖人象之.” *Yijing* 易經 [Book of changes], *Xi ci* 繫辭, *shang* 上.

3. It had been known that the *Mātāṅga Sūtra* was translated in 230, but based on its style of translation, Hayashiya Tomojirō estimated that the scripture was translated after the late fifth century (Hayashiya 1945: 541).

4. *Modeng qiejing*, *shang* 上 5, *Shuoxingtupin* 說星圖品.

5. This English translation is quoted from Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai and BDK America (2015) with minor modifications.

6. *Wen Xuan*, vol. 49, *Hou Hanshu ershiba jiang chuanlun* 後漢書二十八將傳論.

7. *Koryōsa* 高麗史 (History of Koryō), vol. 94, *Yōlchōn* 列傳 7, *Kang Kamch'an* 姜邯贊.

8. Dong Zhongshu, *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals* (Chunqiu fanlu 春秋繁露), *Wei renzhetian* 為人者天.

9. Dong's theory was influential for more than a thousand years, even when *tian* as a deity or mandator was marginalized by the neo-Confucianists during the Song dynasty (Schwartz 1985: 381).

10. *Huainanzi*, *Tianwen xun* 天文訓.

11. Scaly dragons, dragons, badgers, rabbits, vixens, tigers, leopards, *xiezhi* (mythical unicorn lions), oxen, bats, rats, swallows, pigs, *yayu* (mythological monsters), wolves, dogs, pheasants, roosters, crows, monkeys, apes, wild dogs, sheep, river deer, horse deer, serpents, and earthworms.

12. Animal symbols are also present in the *Journey to the West* (Xiyouji 西遊記), a popular sixteenth-century novel. This suggests that the animal symbols became popularized among ordinary people.

13. “納音符十二宿位東:角木蛟亢金龍氐土貉尾火虎箕水豹西:奎木狼婁金狗胃土雉觜火猴參水猿南:井水犴鬼金羊柳土獐翼火蛇軫水蚓北:斗木獬牛金牛女土鼠室火猪壁水瑜中:係四方氣合成” 井水犴 seems to be an error for 井木犴. *Daofa huiyuan*, vol. 63, *Yushu zhankan wulei qidao dafa* 玉樞斬勘五雷祈禱大法.

14. *Lüshi chunqiu*, “jixia ji” 季夏紀, “yinlü” 音律.

15. The relationship between the *tiangan-dizhi* and the *wuxing* is shown in *The Great Meaning of the Five Elements* (*Wuxing dayi* 五行大義) (*Wuxing dayi*, vol. 1, di 第2, Zhigan ming 支干名).

16. “或問曰 人服藥以養性 雲有所宜 有諸乎 抱朴子答曰 按玉策記及開明經, 皆以五音六屬 知人年命之所在 子午屬庚 卯酉屬己 寅申屬戊 丑未屬辛 辰戌屬丙 巳亥屬丁 一言得之者 宮與土也 三言得之者 徵與火也 五言得之者 羽與水也 七言得之者 商與金也 九言得之者 角與木也 若本命 屬土 不宜服青色藥 屬金 不宜服赤色藥 屬木 不宜服白色藥 屬水 不宜服黃色藥 屬火 不宜服黑色藥 以五行之義 木克土 土克水 水克火 火克金 金克木故也 若金丹大藥 不復論宜與不宜也” *Baopuzi, xianyao* 仙藥, neipian 內篇. The translation is quoted from Feifel 1946: 27–28 with minor modifications.

17. This idea was challenged by seventeenth-century intellectuals and replaced by a new mode of thinking, but it is still influential today (Henderson 1984, 1995).

18. “凡納音星 照命剋命 不為忌也 四日度皆然 星房昴虛四日度也 . . . 四日度坐命 星日馬房日兔 昴日雞 虛日鼠 四日度也 以日為主 晝生忌火羅 火羅與日爭光 火為羊刃 掌刃愈凶 羅為岐鋒 併鋒尤惡 . . . 四月度坐命 張月鹿 危月燕 心月狐 畢月鳥 四月度也 以月為主 夜生怕土計 土計卻能掩月 土計是羊刃殺” *Guolao xingzong*, vol. 4.

19. “東方木也 其星倉龍也 西方金也 其星白虎也 南方火也 其星朱鳥也 北方水也 其星玄武也 天有四星之精 降生四獸之體.” *Lunheng, Wushi* 物勢.

20. *Yuanshi*, vol. 79, *Yizhang, Yufu* 輿服 2, *Zhi* 志 29.

21. Unlike in the text, five *jia shenjiang* are represented. One is possibly missing.

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Koryōsa 高麗史 [History of Koryō].

Lunheng 論衡 [Discussion of scales].

Lüshi chunqiu 呂氏春秋 [Spring and autumn (annals) of Master Lü].

Modengqie jing 摩登伽經 [Mātanga Sūtra].

Mengxi bitan 夢溪筆談 [Brush discussions of dream creek].

Piya 埤雅 [Augmented ready guide].

Shangqing huangting wuzang liufu zhenren yuzhou jing 上清黃庭五藏六腑真人玉軸經 [Precious scroll of the Zhenren on the six receptacles and five viscera of the yellow court of Shangqing].

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